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THE
MUTUAL SCOURGES
—
THOMAS BRIGSTOCKE

THE
MUTUAL SCOURGES;
OR,
FRANCE AND HER NEIGHBOURS.

In Historical Drama
IN FOUR ACTS.

BY
THOMAS BRIGSTOCKE.



“La France se perdra par les gens de guerre.”—*Montesquieu.*

“There is a destiny for these two nations
Nobler than that their people should expend
Their blood and treasure to sustain the strife
Of rival despots.”—*Anon.*

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

KING EDWARD THE THIRD.

EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE.

POPE CLEMENT THE SIXTH.

EUSTACE DE ST. PIERRE.

JOHN WISSANT, PETER WISSANT, and
JOHN DAIRE, *Cousins to Eustace.*

GASPAR DE ST. COLOMBE and Another
Citizen.

IVAN, *a Welsh Lord.*

ROGER, *Chief Cook to KING EDWARD.*

M'FERGUS, *an Irish Captain.*

A Chamberlain to the King.

A Purveyor; a Fool; a Friar; Cardinals; Bishops; Priests;
Barons; Knights; Soldiers; Citizens; a Welsh Bard; Mes-
sengers; etc.

PHILIPPA OF HAINAUT, *Queen of EDWARD THE THIRD.*

JOAN OF VALOIS, *her Mother, and Sister to Philip the Sixth of
Valois, King of France.*

BERTHA, *Attendant on the Queen.*

JUSTINE, *Wife to EUSTACE DE ST. PIERRE.*

MARTHE, *her Maid.*

IDA, *her English Cousin.*

WIFE of ROGER the Cook.

Sisters of a Religious Order and other Women.

Guardian Spirits and Demons.

} *Six
Burgesses
of
Calais.*

THE MUTUAL SCOURGES.

AN HISTORICAL DRAMA.

IN FOUR ACTS.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—A Rocky Crater of a Volcano, overlooking a desolate region. A Spirit is seen standing on one of the crags with a sword in his hand.

Spirit. While the delinquencies of private men
May 'scape their meed until the final doom,
The crimes of nations must be punished here.
The avenging hour is come. My office now
Is to unchain the most malignant powers
Hostile to man. Ye slaughter-loving fiends,
Fiercer than those that wont to walk the earth,
Arise!

[A number of Demons ascend from the Crater.]

Chief Demon. What spirit art thou,—seraph or fiend,—
Whose voice hath called us from unfathom'd deeps?

Spirit. Not such as ye are, yet perchance as dread,
For now, a fiery messenger of wrath,
My deeds shall seem like yours, and I avail me
Of your malevolence for other ends
Than those ye seek.

Chief D. What wouldest thou with us then ?

Spirit. To tell you ye are free to range the world,
Become incarnate in what shapes ye list,
Or, unembodied, mingling with the air,
Fill it with deadly plagues : taint everywhere
Each element and fount of life, suppress
The kindly dews and rains, cause earthquake, drought,
Famine, and war. Doubtless ye will exult
O'er millions doom'd. But know there is a power
Shall curb ye when the time is due. Till then
I leave you to your wills.

[*He disappears.*]

All. A glorious spirit !

Chief D. (to one of them) What wilt thou be ?

2nd D. A soldan of the East
Spreading a false religion by the sword.

Chief D. And thou ?

3rd D. I'll simulate the dark simoom,
And in my cloudy chariot, whirlwind-borne,
From my rank nostrils breathe a mortal blast
O'er caravans and armies.

Chief D. Good. What thou ?

4th D. Not such a puny minister of death (*pointing to the 3rd Demon*).

I'll be a triple-crowned potentate,
And preach a new crusade. More crime is wrought
In Heav'n's than other name. Four million souls*
Already are destroy'd ; then let me hope
To snare as many more. Nought answers better
Than to persuade men 'tis a sacred duty
To persecute each other for their creed,
And that salvation lies in mortal hate.
No sword I'll wear, but at my lightest word,
Ten thousand swords shall from their scabbards leap,

* The number supposed to have perished in the Holy Wars.

And bless'd by me shall as unsparing prove,
As fangs of famish'd tigers o'er their prey.

Chief D. By Hades, 'tis a good device. (*To another*)
What's thine?

5th D. I'll join the elements that have conspired
To scourge half Asia with a loathsome pest,
That twice twelve millions* in twelve months hath slain.
I'll spread it over Africa and Europe,
Even to the confines of the western main.

Chief D. Better and better still. Declare thou next
What earthly mask delights thee to assume.

6th D. The semblance of a mighty conqueror,
Whose lust of empire nought on earth can quench.
Dazzling my legions with the *fatuus-glare*
Of martial glory, will I lead them on
To victory and victory and—ruin.
I'll glut my eyes with carnage, make myself
Drunk with the blood of nations. They will then
Fall down and worship me; for 'tis men's wont
To idolize their fell destroyers most.

Chief D. A scheme of noble promise. And now, say,
Thou darkest of us all, what choice is thine?

7th D. A pseudo-patriot, a man of state,
Who, loth to be ignored, seeks notoriety,
Even in his country's ruin. Be it mine
To stir up France and England to new wars,
Than which no greater evil can befall
The universal world, or further roll
Back into barbarism th' advancing tide
Of human progress and development;
Make these two generous nations *mutual scourges*,

* Barnes, quoting from Knighton, says, "8000 legions (23,840,000 souls) had been swept away in one year, as it was reported before the Pope at Avignon."

That e'en in time of peace shall frowning stand
Like giant agonists, but taking breath
To fight another round.

8th D. 'Twill need *two* fiends.

7th D. One will suffice. Rouse but one power, the other
Must needs defend its own, and war ensue.

Chief D. Enough. Then to our tasks; pour out at once
The lava of our fury on the world,
Make of each kingdom an *Acelandama*,
Till we exhaust Destruction's armoury,
And gorge the realms of death with human kind.

Away!

[*They disperse.*]

SCENE II.—*The Hall of the Consistory in the Papal Palace
at Avignon.* CLEMENT VI. seated on a crimson throne,
surrounded by Cardinals and other dignitaries. JOAN
OF VALOIS, *Abbess of Fontaine au Tertre*, on his right.

Clement. Fair sister, thus, as far as in us lies,
You have obtained the object of your suit,
Which no persuasive words nor pious tears,
By you so lavishly poured out, did need,
Or slow deliberation on our side,
To win our full consent; for what so well
Becomes us, Hear'n's Vicegerent here on earth,
As the mild offices of peace and love?
Hence with paternal care we have already
Dispatched the Cardinals of Tusculum
And of Saints John and Paul, with ample powers,
To leave no means untried whereby to stay
Th' insensate purpose of these stubborn kings,
Who still, with ruthless forays and reprisals,
Ravage each other's realms. We join you ther
And your fair sisterhood, in cordial prayers,

That, trusting rather in the force of right
 Than in the right of force, they may admit
 Our fatherly arbitrement. If not,
 We shall have used, in their behoof and yours,
 The strongest weapons that the Church assumes :
 The weapons of the Church are prayers and tears.*

Joan of V. The measure of my thanks, most holy Father,
 Equals the plenitude of your good will,
 For both are boundless ; and I now return,
 Confirm'd in hope that peace may soon prevail
 Between my testy brother, He of France,
 And my stern son-in-law. Oh, I have sued
 As did the Theban mother to her sons
 Ere they had plung'd the fratricidal steel
 Into each other's breasts ; but all in vain.
 Through Philip's aid afforded to the Scots
 The Border towns were burnt, the lands laid waste,
 Durham demolish'd, and three thousand souls,
 Monks, canons, nuns, and peaceful citizens,
 Put to the sword ; and, as your Holiness knows,
 King Edward's vengeance stamps the soil of France
 With like mementos. From the northern shores
 Up to the gates of Paris, may be seen
 Blood-sodden fields and reeking villages,
 Black, shapeless homesteads of poor husbandmen,
 Whose widows and whose orphans, left to perish,
 Crowd the highways ; towns sacked and rased,
 Others beleaguer'd, that must fall by famine.
 Calais, as yet, holds out, but oh ! what horrors
 Are perpetrated there. But I will cease
 To harrow your paternal heart with grief.
 Oh, may your powerful voice persuade both kings,

* *Preces et lachrymæ sunt arma ecclesiæ.* A saying of some of the early Christians in time of persecution.

That he whose purblind policy would build
 A nation's glory on its neighbour's ruin,
 Must prove the curse of both. Most holy father,
 Once more, I say farewell, while on my knees,
 I crave your blessing for myself and friends.

Clement. Sister, farewell; and may the wings of angels
 Shield you and yours upon your homeward way,
 And heaven your holy mission so approve
 As to incline your kinsmen's hearts to peace.

[*Exeunt JOAN OF VALOIS and her train.*]

Now, rev'rend brethren, say what other cares
 Most claim deliberation and despatch?

A Chamberlain. The deputation from the city of Rome
 Awaits the leisure of your Holiness.

Clement. Say rather from the city of Rienzi.

[*Said ironically.*]

But we will give them audience presently.
 Brethren, the times are crowded with events
 Of gravest import to the Holy See;
 And all your wisdom and experience
 Must guide our councils. We, whose power is felt
 By every throne in Christendom, have failed
 To crush the turbulent oligarchs of Rome;
 And since have failed to stem the popular power
 We strove to hurl against them through Rienzi,
 Who, in his turn, defies us. The good will
 Of England and of Louis of Bavaria,
 Abetting and emboldening this arch traitor,
 May lead to worse results. What say you, then,
 Concession, or refusal with high hand?

[*Enter a Messenger.*]

But wherefore this intrusion?

Messenger. Holy father,
 Tidings from Rome say that the populace

Have risen against Rienzi, who has fled
No one knows whither.

Clement. Ha! Rienzi fled,
The crozier still is stronger than the sword,
Dismiss the deputation. They shall know
Rome lies not in the compass of her walls,
That screen awhile rebellious renegades.
Rome is where'er Rome's master plants his chair;
Rome is at Avignon, ourself is Rome.* [*Exeunt.*]

**SCENE III.—*The Tent of KING EDWARD, in the Camp or
“Town of Wood” before Calais.***

K. Edw. (solus). The sword avails no more, and prowess
now

Finds time to wipe his crimson'd arms ; meanwhile,
The tooth of Famine, sharper than our steel,
And mightier than our brazen battering-rams,
Shall pierce the stony battlements of Calais,
Crush these redoubted knights and citizens,
Who late with contumelious scorn refused
Our proffered terms. A heavy debt they owe us
In blood and treasure, nor shall justice bate
One jot of all her due since France resolves
That blood must be the sole cement of peace.

[Enter a Chamberlain.]

Cham. My liege,
The Reverend Cardinals from Avignon
Again crave audience ere they quit the camp.

* "Roma non sta fra quelle mura . . .
Roma son io."—*Metastasio, Att. Reg.*

K. Edw. Let them be ushered in. (*Exit Cham.*) They come in vain

If they would sway us from our firm resolve,
Already known to them. (*Enter Cardinals.*) Lords Cardinals,
We bid you welcome.

1st Car. Most Illustrious King,
We humbly thank you, and if once again
We proffer our good offices, we do so
But in the interest and on the plea
Of pure humanity: for while we speak,
Hundreds in Calais die the worst of deaths;
Nay, twice five hundred have already perished
After long agony of rav'nous famine.
Of these some lie within their fathers' tombs,
Of others you may view the mouldering corses
Between the camp and the beleaguer'd town,
While some, Oh, horror! have been doom'd to find
A living grave. In you then, Sir, it lies
To stay these miseries.

K. Edw. It lies in *them*.
Must we become purveyors to our foes,
And nourish hands that slay our country's guardians?
Nourish—not Frenchmen who might claim the meed
Of honour'd foemen, but a nestling horde
Of pirates and of bold adventurers,
The exiled scum of other States, and late
The terror of our peaceful mariners
And seaboard towns.* For culprits such as they
Shall clemency give place to iron justice;
And as we deem we'll pardon or condemn.
As for their miseries, they have to thank
Philip alone, with whom we sought but peace.

* Giovanni Villani says of Calais, "Era una spelonca di ladri e pirati di mare."

1st Car. But had you not, through doubt of his good faith,

Arm'd all the strength and chivalry of England
For undisguised aggression, instigated
And aided by the exiled Count of Artois,
Peace had not been disturb'd.

K. Edw. What! must we then
Make ourselves herns for hawks to swoop at us—
Mark the raised sword, yet wait to feel its edge—
See the incendiary apply the torch—
Yet stir not till the flames have reached our ears?
No, rather do we rush from out our homes,
To stifle danger where it first began.
We knew too well the dark designs of Philip;
The forays of the Scots into our realm
Were aided by his gold, nay, by his men.
This was the price we paid to Philip of Valois
For hollow peace. As for the Count of Artois,
His kinsman and his friend, who most of all
Help'd Philip to the throne, his only crime—
Pardonless crime—was, that his aid had grown
No longer needful, and his presence seem'd
At the French Court too patent a remembrance
Of Philip's obligation;—for we know
That obligation in ungenerous natures
Oft breeds for gratitude the deadliest hate.—
Such hatred did pursue the attainted Count,
Who found no safe asylum till he reach'd
The shores of England. But meanwhile his wife,
His children, his dependants,—all were cast
Into a loathsome dungeon. Then, forsooth!
Philip complained we harbour'd his worst foe.
But we beseech you, Rev'rend Cardinals,
Bear him these words: England shall still be found

The exile's home, the ark of the oppressed,
 The hostess of all nations, who with her
 Would link their hands in faith and amity :
 But to forsaken allies and hostile legions,
 We'll make the watery girdle of our isle
 Impassable as is the frozen belt
 That guards the secret mansions of the North,
 Whose icy blasts and host-inhuming snows
 Mock the invading world. So answer we
 Our cousin of France.

1st Car. Then, most redoubted King,
 Since you refuse all overtures of peace,
 We can but grieve that you pluck down on you
 The curse pronounced on him who would remove
 His neighbour's landmark, and—more fearful still—
 On him who sheds his brother's blood. Farewell.

K. Edw. Farewell. This blood be on the heads of those
 Who brought us hither to defend our shores.
 God speed you, Reverend Cardinals, we bid you
 Most heartily farewell. [*Exeunt Cardinals.*]

K. Edw. I know you well,
 You and your master : skilful he to join,
 God-serving with self-seeking, and dress up
 The wiliest policy in holiest garb.
 Now that it serves his turn he counsels peace ;
 Since France, to whom he owes his triple crown,
 Meets with but adverse fortune in the strife ;
 The French and English benefices now
 Fill not the Papal coffers as before.
 Ay, he can be as suits his purposes,
 The humble mouthpiece of authority—
 “ Servant of servants,” as he styles himself—
 Or arrogant almighty attributes,
 And ape the Thunderer. By my patron saint,

These proud ecclesiastics use us kings
 But as their constables to execute
 Their insolent behests. But if again
 We kiss "his holy feet," we'll tie his hands.* [Exit.]

SCENE IV.—*The outskirts of the English camp. A number of Knights, Squires, and Soldiers regaling; M'FERGUS, an Irish Captain, a Surgeon, and others, seated at a table, a Girl waiting upon them.*

Chorus.

Hail to the King, to our soldier King,
 Our chivalry worthy to lead ;
 His sword is his sceptre, his helm is his crown,
 And his throne is his barbéd steed.

 Hail to the Queen, whose Court is the camp,
 To the idol of warriors we kneel ;
 When her foemen assail, then her robe is of mail,
 And her handmaids are fire and steel.

 Hail to the Prince, to the black-mail'd knight ;
 And hail to the friends of all ;
 But the cannon's mouth shall greet their foes,
 Who seek our nation's fall.

Captain M'F. (to the Girl.) Another stoup of wine, my little honeysuckle (*she pours it out*). Troth ! these wines of Gascony and Alsace are not amiss to wash down some of the good things of the convoy we have intercepted.

Surgeon. And to aid us in celebrating the Queen's arrival from England.

Capt. By St. Edward, the King has kept as gay a Court here these three days as if he had been in Westminster ;

* In the letters of Edward to the Pope, we commonly find at the commencement the words "with grateful kissings of your holy feet."

with masques and revelry and dancing in the royal pavilion, tournaments in the tilting-ground, and the camp at night a blaze of splendour.

Surg. And methinks half the royal household are in their cups to-day, by way of worthily terminating the revels. See! here comes Roger, the King's Chief Cook, with the Purveyor. I'll warrant neither can tell a battle-axe from a basting-ladle.

Capt. Roger can tuck more wine and wassail under his doublet than any three men in the camp, without betraying it save by the wagging of his tongue that, like Thersites', gives no fair word to any.

Surg. But there is a spice of grave waggery in him when he is fuddled. The Black Prince calls him gibingly the philosopher. See how maudlin wise he looks!

[Enter the Cook and Purveyor.]

Cook. I say the world is governed from the kitchen rather than the throne; and people's tempers and opinions, politics, religion, and such like, are all a question of victuals. If they don't eat alike they can't think alike; and nations, like individuals, must disagree if there be no bond of wholesome cookery between 'em.

Purveyor. Roger, thou'rt right; thought is only the essence of victuals, and hence Signor Maccaroni never sees anything from a German sour-cabbagy point of view; while frogs always disapprove of the politics of beef and all the race of Bull.

Cook. And harkee! those cunning Cardinals who came from Avignon to treat for peace went away with fleas in their ears all through,—what dost thou think?

Pur. I can't imagine; but I dare be sworn they went away with no more than they brought with them.

Cook. 'Twas all through an old haddock that—

Pur. What! one of the Ambassadors?

Cook. No, no; an old haddock the King had eaten on that fast-day.

Pur. What had that to do with the question of peace or war?

Cook. More than 'thou thinkest. Why, I've known the fate of England and of Europe changed by an indigestible piece of Bologna sausage that gave the King an internal twinge while he was talking to a Plenipotentiary.

Pur. Ah, that comes of letting the fate of a nation depend on one man. He might ruin us all through a cramp in his midriff, or the gout in his great toe.

Cook. Certes he might: and I could have whispered to their Eminences, "Never ask a Plantagenet a favour on a fast-day." My father, who was cook to the late King, used to say the Plantagenets were wild boars before eating, and turtledoves after. I know the King's palate; and I tell thee there's more logic in a bit of a green goose, stuffed as *I* stuff it, than in a Cardinal's whole carcase crammed with all the sophistry of Rome.

Pur. By St. George, I believe thee. The Cardinals should have conferred first with the King's Cook.

Cook. Ay, the powers of Europe will never be at peace until cooks be made ministers and plenipotentiaries.

Capt. Ha! ha! His Excellency Sir Roger de Casserole.

Cook. By the Lord! they'd do more good than some *blessed ones* we know of. The great tests of a nation's civilization are its cooks. Man, thou know'st, is a cooking animal, and therefore men were not human until they could roast and boil and stew.

Pur. Then what were our first parents, who knew none of thy craft?

Cook. Thou dolt, do not great philosophers tell us our first parents were monkeys?

Pur. Monkeys?

Cook. Ay, and some of us are great monkeys still, only reared on the hinder legs (*pokes at the Purveyor*); but as cookery and other philosophy dawned upon our race, we gradually lost our heads—I mean our tails—the more philosophy, the less tail,—until it dwindled down to the true type of human nobility and majesty, and then—

Pur. Then our souls got into our brains.

Cook. Into our brains! Oh, thou everlasting baboon, wisdom and cookery will never shorten thy tail, and make a man of thee. I do believe thou hast it curled up thy back at this moment, and thou wilt rather decline toward the species of the ass. Dost thou not know the seat of the soul is *here*?

Pur. There! Truly thou'rt a man of great capacity.

Cook. Well, my great capacity lies *here*; that's the sensorium, where all Englishmen think and feel, for do we not stir our finest emotions by feasting? *that's* where our charity begins, and sometimes ends. But whom have we here? A merry company of knights and soldiers, with my friend the Surgeon?

Surg. Ah! my Doctor Profundus of the culinary art, my high-priest of Gaster, the most adored of gods, how farest thou?

Cook. What! young Cataplasm, thou here! Dost thou presume to sit with those who have slain fifty thousand men, sacked towns and villages, put a score of garrisons to the sword, and filled the English camp with plunder?

Surg. Ay, old sauceboat; though—I grant thee—to cut off men's arms and legs only to *save* their lives brings little honour or emolument.

Cook. Oh, if thou seek honour or emolument, leave the curing and take to the killing trade, unless thou couldst be a royal cook, and cure nothing but hams and salmon.

Surg. In sooth, thy counsel is not amiss, as times go.

Cook. No; let thy lancet be a lance, thy boluses cannon balls, thy powders only fit for guns, amputate heads, bleed at the heart, then thou'l be somebody. A genius for slaughter may even ennable thee; but when didst thou ever hear of a lord of the healing art? True nobility must be baptized in blood, and date its titles from red battle-fields. Cut off heads—heads; there's more glory in it.

[Enter a *Sewer*, the latter dragging in a *Youth* by the ear.]

How now? what's the matter?

Sewer. This kitchen youngster has stolen the purse of King Philip's Fool, who was taken prisoner at Cressy; and the Black Prince, with whom thou know'st the Fool is a favourite, commands thee to visit the thief with condign punishment.

Cook. Then will I sit on the bench (*sits astride a bench*). Now, sirrah, what hast thou to say for thyself?

Youth. Oh, Sir, I cry you mercy. I thought we had all a right to plunder the French.

Cook. Ay, but according to law and Act of Parliament. One may plunder to one's heart's content according to law. Hear me then while I lay it down on this point, derived from the practice of the *highest* authorities. If thou covet thy neighbour's purse, and rob him on the highway, thou art a despicable thief, and the gallows or the gibbet is thy due; but if thou covet thy neighbour's kingdom, and canst contrive to steal his crown, though at never so much cost of blood and treasure to thy country, then art thou a *preux chevalier*—a hero; the very widows and orphans thou hast made will applaud thy right royal freebootery, the country thy rapacity has impoverished and demoralized shall crown thee with laurels, priests shall praise God for thy successful butcheries, and history, with her lying pen, shall hold

thee up as an ensample to all succeeding generations. But as for thee, thy position is not exalted enough to defy the laws of God and man with impunity ; thou art but a small trader in iniquity, without capital, for though doubtless as ambitious as thy neighbours, thou art not at the head of a gang of fifty thousand men.

Capt. (coming forward). Why, thou ironical traitor, dost thou speak thus of the honourable profession of arms ? If thou wert not the King's Cook, and drawling drunk, thy head should pay the forfeit of thy tongue.

Cook. Drunk or sober, hear me. I honour the soldier armed for freedom and fatherland as one of God's noblest creatures ; but he who loves aggressive war is but a valiant homicide. (*To the Youth*) I say, then, that as the gibbet or the halter is too good preferment for thee, the sentence of this court is that thou be drowned in the nearest dyke : half-drowned to-day, and half to-morrow.

Youth. Oh, have pity on me. I be an ignorant young man as knows nothing about robbing according to law.

Cook. No ; and thou hast no more honesty or good grammar in thee than a pettifogging Welsh lawyer, who, like thee, lightens the pockets of fools. Away !

[*Some drag him away.*]

[*A tumult is heard.*]

Cook. Hark ! What mean those cheers ?

[*Enter a number of Soldiers, one bearing an open letter.*]

Capt. What has happened ?

A Soldier. A letter from the Governor of Calais to King Philip has been intercepted. It shows the terrible condition of the city, which must be ours ere long.

All. Read—read.

Soldier (reading). "Very dear and much redoubted Lord, You must know that although our people are all safe, the

town is in want of corn and wine and meat, for know that there is nothing that has not been eaten, even to the dogs. the cats, and the horses. And in the town there is no food to be found, unless we eat the flesh of our own people. Thus we have agreed amongst ourselves, that if we have not speedy aid, we will issue out of the town into the fields, and fight to live or die; for we love better to die honourably in the field, than the one to feed upon the other.”*

Capt. Enough; let us convey it to the King at once.

All. Ay, to the King.

[*Exeunt cheering.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The interior of Calais. A Room in the House of EUSTACE. EUSTACE and JUSTINE; their child lying asleep.*

Just. Once more, albeit in vain, search well the town,
If aught that hath escap'd the ravenous crowd
Be found, convertible to food. O Eustace!
I dread to think upon the past; yet more
I fear the future of this direful famine.
Better give all our wealth than perish thus.

Eust. My own Justine! though we be rich indeed
In houses, lands, and merchandise, alas!
These now avail us not; for who would give
The means of life for that which must so soon
Become the enemy's? Thou know'st too well
For what a scant supply, and of what sort,
We lately barter'd our best house in Calais;
And now, if aught to yield us sustenance

* This is a literal translation of a portion of the original letter from John de Vienne. (*Vide* Knighton.)

Can still be bought, 'twill be for gold alone,
And the last piece is gone.

Eust. (embraces her) Dearest of earthly beings! this
sorrow too
Must be endur'd. I'll seek through every purlieu,
In every nook and corner, street and lane;
And Heaven reward my search! I have a thought
I'll speed me to the convent of St. Nicholas;
'Tis said the monks there have good store of food.

Just. But they are chiefly from Guienne, and therefore
Subjects of England, who, ere many hours,
Will chant *Te Deums* for the fall of Calais.

Eust. But I may steal into the convent church,
Conceal myself until the prayers be over,
Then burst the tabernacle that contains
The sacramental bread. A saint of old
Did this when hunger press'd him, yet was blameless.

Just. Do this if all should fail; and now away.

[Enter a Boy.]

Boy. Sweet mother, let me place my hands in thine;
They are so cold, and I am hungry, mother.

Just. He rends my heart. I've nothing for thee now.
Poor child! What can I do? My last resort
Shall be to rush into the enemy's camp;
There obtain sustenance for him, or die. [Execute]

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*The Interior of the Church of St. Nicholas at Calais. A crowd of Women on their knees before the shrine of the Virgin sing the following:*

Ave Maria! Virgin Mother dear,
 In this dread hour of agony and fear
 Thy aid we crave.
 Prisoned within these high beleaguer'd walls
 Famine and pestilence and sights of death
 Torture us ere we yield our breath,
 While from without a direr fate appals
 Matron and daughter
 Than sudden slaughter.
 O whither shall we fly but to the grave?
 For none can save.
 Husbands, fathers, brothers slain,
 Powerless those who still remain.
 Yet happy they who die, not they who live,
 Since life has nought to give
 But tears and misery.
 Then if the hour be nigh
 That we must die,
 Remember us, O Virgin Mother dear
 Thy potent prayer
 Can save us from despair,
 Remember us, O Virgin Mother, hear.

[*As the women retire, the moon rises and casts a gleam across the nave. EUSTACE advances.*]

Eustace. What a soul-breathing awe pervades this place!
 Here, on the wings of holiest harmony,
 Devotion loves to soar, and Penitence,
 With eyes of agony, bedews the ground,
 And hallow'd virgins tell their orisons:
 Here do my parents' sacred relics lie
 Fast by yon shrine of martyr'd innocence.

And shall I these profane? My mind misgives:
 I hear a noise; but haply 'twas the wind
 Sighing among the carved monuments.
 Those statues in the moonbeam seem to live,
 And bend their blank and ghostly eyeballs on me.
 My saintly father's too among them lies,
 With looks august, and grand as when he lay
 But newly dead, and his exalted soul
 Had cast a glory on him as it fled.
 Sure something flitted through the gloomy aisle,
 And touch'd me as it passed,—better begone;

[*An organ begins to sound the "Te Deum."*]

Yet veneration for the dead must yield
 To love of those dear kindred ones yet living,
 Whom to preserve I will dare anything.

[*Goes up to the altar, and attempts to open the tabernacle; but in so doing throws down the crucifix. A Monk, alarmed by the noise, enters the church.*]

Monk. What wretch art thou whose sacrilegious hand
 Has dared pollute those hallow'd elements?

Eust. I am a man whom hunger and despair
 Have wrought to deeds he would not else have done;
 But give me food, 'tis known you hoard it here.

Monk. Begone! we have none.

Eust. (*goes to the altar again*). Then I'll seize what's here.

Monk. Ho! brothers, help! He robs the tabernacle.

[*A number of Monks enter.*

Eust. Ye hireling priests, pluck from the sanctuary
 The tabernacled symbol of your God,
 And set an idol there; 'twere less a crime
 Than with *Te Deums* sanctimoniously
 To 'ffront the ear of High Benevolence,

As if the God of Peace were accessory
To deeds of Cain.

A Monk. Seize him.

Eust. (drawing his sword). Stand back, I say!

[*He retires with his sword pointed at them while they follow him.*] [Exeunt.]

SCENE III.—*An outpost of the English camp. A Sentinel on duty. A number of Women are seen in the background. JUSTINE and Son approach the Soldier, with another lady.*

Sentinel. Advance no further towards our camp. Who art thou?

Lady. One of the childless mothers you have widowed, Whom hunger and despair have thus emboldened To brave your steel, and crave a crust of bread. We are the last of the five hundred souls Driven out from Calais as poor “useless mouths”; And we have liv’d till now on—oh, I shudder To tell you on what food; but give us bread.

Sent. You know our orders; we may not relieve you On pain of death.

Lady. Oh, yet have pity on us. You are alone; none will perceive the deed. I was well born, and may reward you yet.

Sent. Back, back to Calais. Nay, if you press on— [holds his pike towards her.]

Lady. I fear no steel; 'twould give me rest. Alas! We cannot choose but die; shut out from Calais, And thus repuls'd by you.

Sent. For this thank those Who drove you from the town, and your own King. But here come our King Edward and the Prince.

Just. I'll speak to them. Heaven grant me strength to curse them.

Sent. Begone, I say!

K. Edw. Hold! let her speak. What wouldest thou?

Just. Nought but to curse the author of our woes.

I am the wife of Eustace de St. Pierre,
And I have lost five children in these wars.
My husband, too, is famishing in Calais.
But better be the frenzied outcast mother,
The famish'd citizen, the murder'd child,
Ay, suffer all that conquerors can inflict,
Than be the wretch who caused this misery
To feed his selfish pride or lust of conquest.
Oh, you have children too; but could you know
What 'tis to hear the words, "Your child is dead,
" Struck down amid the iron hail of battle,
" Or had his life stamped out by horses' hoofs,
" Or lost a limb, and lay upon the field
" Calling for you as when a little child
" Till he expir'd,"—could you but picture this,
'Twould stay your barbarous strife; but kings use men
As mere material implements of battle,
That have no feeling but the lust of slaughter.

Soldier. My liege, she's craz'd; let me remove her hence.

K. Edw. Nay, let her rave, since 'tis at Philip only.

Just. Ay, let her rave, if there be potency
In a bereaved mother's heart-wrung curse,
May Heaven afflict you with some fierce disease,
That maddening pain consume your weary days,
And hideous visions make your nights abhor'd.
And in those visions may you feel the woes
You've heap'd on us, as palpably as we;
May famine's fangs and ulcering pestilence
Seem to devour your flesh; may fire and steel

Blast and transpierce you : nor mere bodily sense,
 But all the scorpion scourges of the soul
 By turns afflict you,—hate, revenge, remorse,
 Heart-gnawing envy, terror, and despair.
 Madden'd by grief and rage may you behold
 Your wives, your daughters outrag'd, tortur'd, slain ;
 Your infants, yet unwean'd, impal'd on spears ;
 Your homes in flames, your substance all destroy'd,
 And you yourselves become the scorn of all—
 Outcast and destitute. Then at the last,
 When mortal nature can no more endure,
 May fiends stand round and mock your agony
 As men have ours, and in your dying ears
 Shriek out, “ Ye glory-seekers, this is war,
 “ The measure ye have meted unto others.
 “ Your cries for mercy be but as the wind
 “ That howls through the deserted halls and homes
 “ Ye have made desolate ; but come, accurs'd,
 “ Th' immortal torturer, the worm, awaits you.”

[*She falls into the arms of one of the other women ;
 the KING and his train pursue their way.*]

SCENE IV.—*A Street in Calais.*

EUSTACE and GASPAR DE SAINTE COLOMBE.

Eus. What news to-day ?

Gas. None that can yield us comfort.

The enemy is still inexorable,
 And there seems no alternative but death
 By famine or the sword. He will not hear
 Of aught save unconditional surrender.

Eus. And we know what that means. The massacre
 Of whole towns by King Philip, his bad faith,
 The open aid he gave the King of Scots
 At Durham, the destruction of the city,

Where neither rank or age or sex was spared,
 Or church or house left standing—all these deeds,
 Together with our obstinate defence
 And slaughter of the English in our sallies,
 Will be aveng'd. These things have steel'd the heart
 Of the besieger 'gainst all clemency.
 But tell me, Gaspar, know you not where food
 May yet be bought?

Gas. In truth there's none in Calais,
 Save what is hidden, like the miser's hoard.
 The poorer sort,—they who are not expell'd
 As "useless mouths,"—now perish in the streets
 By hundreds, while we richer citizens
 May eke out a few miserable days.
 Oh, I have witness'd scenes of real horror,
 More terrible than aught the Tuscan bard
 Saw in his fancied hell—more ghastly forms
 Than the starv'd Ugolino and his sons,
 Or what we read of that in Jewry once,
 Made the stern Roman soldiers stand aghast,
 And stay awhile their rapine and revenge.

Eus. I too, my friend, have seen such things to-day
 As would have made me weep unnumber'd tears,
 Were not the fount of sorrow frozen up
 And deadened by all-brutalizing famine.
 I stole into a house that, as I near'd,
 Gave out the grateful odour of repast.
 'Twas strange, methought, the door should be unbarr'd
 At such a time. There round a table sate
 Women and men, with wild delirious looks
 And frantic gestures. As I paused they cried,
 "Come, citizen, eat with us if thou wilt."
 But, oh! may these my sorrow-laden eyes
 Be fixed in death ere they again behold

So horrible a meal! I shudd'ring fled,
And sought for food no more. But hark! what means
This tumult?

[*A number of Citizens and Soldiers pass across the stage, fighting for a dead raven. One is wounded, and falls. EUSTACE supports him.*]

Eus. My friend, what ails thee? art thou wounded? say.
Sol. I fear—to death.

Eus. Alas! what had befallen?
Sol. A raven perch'd on a dead citizen.

I with my cross-brow shot him, and I sought
Where to devour the precious prey in secret.
But I was seen, and on me rush'd a crowd
Like wolves, and from my feeble grasp they tore
The corse-fed bird—and—and—

Eus. Poor wretch, he dies;
But life, not death, is true calamity.
In sooth, I almost envy him. Look, Gaspar,
Look what a comely youth it was.

Gas. Ah! well,
Let us compose his limbs and leave him, Eustace.
For 'tis no time to dwell on others' woes.
Hark! 'tis the market-bell. Go with me hence,
And know if aught have chanc'd to yield us hope.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.—*The English Camp. In the background a banquet, at which the KING, QUEEN, BLACK PRINCE, Bishops, Lords, Knights, etc., are seen seated. A Minstrel, with a harp, seated apart. The Fool moving about. The King's Chamberlain approaches the Minstrel, and says, in a pompous manner,—*

'Tis the King's pleasure that you sing a lay.
In praise of some fair dame or as you list.

Song.

1.

Lady, take those pearls away,
 That thy matchless neck adorn !
 Softer they
 Their hues display
 Than, 'mid virgin snows, the morn ;
 Yet no pearl in all its pride
 But must brighter beauty hide.

2.

From that dainty cell, thine ear,
 Lov'd confessional of love,
 Whispers dear
 So wont to hear,
 Sweet ! those pendent gems remove,
 Gauds and gold in vain would aid
 Nature's triumph there display'd.

[*The BLACK PRINCE comes forward.*]

Blk. P. Thanks, my Welsh bard. Well pleas'd, we fill
 for you

The hirlas horn, according to the custom
 Of your prince Hywel when a bard sang well.
 Drink !

Bard. Long life to the hope of England !

Blk. P. Thanks.

[*Here follows a dance of Maidens, and exeunt.*]

SCENE VI.—*A Street in Calais.* GASPAR DE SAINT-COLOMBE,
 leaning against the pedestal of one of the columns of a
 Gothic porch, is binding up his wounded arm. IDA ap-
 proaches unseen by him.

Gas. My wound, though slight, is painful. He who
 gave it

Will never more defend an English outpost.
 O Ida! I would brave far more for thee
 Than what the scant supply this wallet holds
 Hath cost me. Fear bides not with love; and yet
 What can I hope for from that marble breast?
 Years have I lov'd her, but in vain. Her hand
 Never pressed mine, though she receiv'd my pressure
 Without disdain, alas! but without love.
 At parting, too, I've kissed her on the cheek,
 Which she has yielded as to friendship only
 For her and for her kindred, not to love.
 Would we had never met! But, oh, my heart!
 She surely is the sweetest of God's creatures
 On this side heaven.

Ida. This "marble breast," he calls it!
 Twas such, but 'tis not now. As purest rills
 Speed to their ocean bourne beneath the snow
 Unceasingly, as when their course is sunned,
 So the warm current of my heart's best love
 Flows silently to find repose in him.
 But 'tis no time to think of tender joys
 While numbers perish hourly. I must pass him.

Gas. (seeing her) Beautiful Ida—Ida! nay, one word,
 One look. Turn not away. A soul so gentle
 Never before look'd forth through such sweet windows
 As Ida's eyes.

Ida. Flatterer!
Gas. True love, they say,
 Was ever such, yet knows it not.

Ida. Then love
 Is never truthful.

Gas. Then untruthful most
 Happly when most sincere.

Ida. Gaspar, this dream

Time will dispel. You know few maidens here
 To test your judgment of these poor plain features ;
 You would not else pronounce them beautiful.

Gas. Sweet Ida, if you be not what I deem you,
 And you deserve not that idolatry
 My heart delights to pay ; oh ! wake me not
 From such a dream of joy ; for you have power
 To make this world a paradise to me,
 Or, like another angel, drive me forth.

Ida. Oh, speak no more of love. I am to blame
 To listen to your tale at such a time.

You are a citizen-soldier, and your place
 Is where your comrades are. The famine rages ;
 The populace now throng the battlements
 To lift their voices all in one loud wail
 Toward the French army, and so intimate
 To what extremities we are reduced.*
 It seems unmanly then to think of love.
 I am your friend, and would not have it said
 That love had made you weak and cowardly.

Gas. Love never makes men cowards. Though some-
 times

He makes them weak, 'tis weakness of that sort
 Thou shouldst not call unmanly. But, farewell.
 Receive this wallet ; its contents, though scanty,
 May serve you at your need. To win it for you
 I sought the enemy's camp, else ere this hour
 I had been with my comrades.

Ida. Thanks, dear Gaspar.
 Forgive my harsh reproof. But you are pale ;
 What ! are you wounded ?

Gas. Nay, 'tis but a scratch.

* Froissart.

Ida. Oh, I perceive it all ; you've bled for me,
 Oh, let me tend you, Gaspar ; go not yet.
 Indeed you shall not. [*The groans of the people are heard.*]

Gas. Hark ! the populace !
 Again ! Can heart of man mark that unmoved ?
 Farewell ? [*Exit.*]
Ida. Stay, stay, sweet Gaspar, stay ! I love you.
 He's gone. This breast, he'll deem, is marble still.
 Oh ! I will tell him all ere this day pass. [*Exit weeping.*]

SCENE VII.—*A room in the house of EUSTACE. JUSTINE and IDA; the former reclining on a couch.*

Just. My gentle English cousin, whom I've loved
 As my own child, since you became an orphan,
 How shall I now protect you ? Soon the foe
 Will be within our gates.

Ida. Oh, my sweet cousin !
 Let me but share your fate, whate'er it be—
Just. Ida, you must not stay in Calais ; no.
 You know not what may chance. O God ! 'tis fearful
 To think what deeds will here be done by men
 Panting for rapine, burning with desire,
 And stimulated by delay.

Ida. I shudder !
Just. There is a tiger in the human breast ;
 And once unloos'd by war, no beast of prey
 Ravens more fiercely or with less control.
 Sweet Ida, would you were less beautiful !
 Go, get you male attire, and hide your hair,
 And make your slender waist more like a youth's.
 Then haste you to the English camp ; for there
 You may find safety. Take your lute with you,

And feign to be a minstrel. We must part,
To save you, Ida. We may meet again.

Go, love; there is no time to speak our sorrow.

Ida. Our Lady shield me. If I yield to this,
And seek the English camp, 'tis for your sakes;
And Heaven vouchsafe that I may soon return. [*Exit Ida.*]

[*JUSTINE turns to her child, who lies asleep.*]

He sleeps as calmly as if all were well;
In rosy warmth, within his tiny nest.
O my sweet birdling! though the time be past
Long since that I should wean thee, yet I dare not,
Lest thou shouldst starve; and yet this failing breast
Ere long will yield thee little else but pity.

[*Throws herself upon her knees.*]

Angels of Peace and Mercy! ye who sigh
O'er human suffering and delinquency,
Is there no virtue in your intercessions
To stave these horrors from the innocent?
Why, why was food made the chief minister
To life? Or why should not the very air
Be charged with aliment, and every pore
Be made the conduit to supply our need?
So would it be beyond the power of man
Thus to afflict his fellow. But I rave,
And tax His counsels who doth all things wisely.

SCENE VIII.—*The English Camp. Two Knights seated before a tent.*

1st Knt. The morrow will be a stirring day, methinks.

2nd Knt. Ay! if the king change not his purpose, we

shall enjoy rich plunder, fair women, and vengeance enough to compensate us for a twelvemonth's inaction.

1st Knt. 'Tis said the incognito red knight will be with us.

2nd Knt. What! he who fought with us so valiantly at Cressy?

1st Knt. The same. He hath been seen about the camp.

2nd Knt. Ha! I well remember his red plume floating o'er the thickest slaughter like a death-bird dabbled in gore; and wherever he went he created a circle of havoc around him.

1st Knt. They say he hath taken a vow never to show his face to mortal man until he shall have accomplished some deed of arms worthy of his great name.*

2nd Knt. It would seem true, for he ever wears his visor down; but I once saw his eyes glaring like a lion's through the bars while he sang a war-song.

[*The Red Knight appears in the background.*]

1st Knt. Ah! that which he sang the night before the battle, which so inspirited our men that they neither asked nor gave quarter (*a voice is heard singing*). List! I'faith 'tis his voice. Behold him!

Song.

1.

Where with furious battle cry,
Legions close to win or die,
And the thundercloud of war
Calls the death bird from afar,
And red vengeance rolls his eye,
Grants no quarter,—there am I.

* Eccentric vows were common in those days, as for instance, that of the Earl of Salisbury and his companions, who vowed never to use but one eye until they should perform some great deed of valour.—See *Froissart and St. Pelaye, Sur l'Ancienne Chevalerie, etc.*

2.

Where the leaguered city falls,
 And the victor mounts the walls ;
 Rapine, riot, outrage, slaughter,
 Heed no matron, spare no daughter ;
 Spoil and carnage glut the eye,
 Whet the ardour,—there am I.

3.

Holy war, thy sulphury breath,
 Falchion blest and bolt of death ;
 The thundering tramp of cohorts bright,
 The shock, the rout, are my delight ;
 Glorious war, whate'er they cry,
 God or Allah,—there am I.

1st Knt. Right welcome, noble knight.

Red Knt. Thanks.

2nd Knt. Sir Knight, we respect your incognito ; yet we would gladly know your country and your assumed name, if you would deign to reveal them ?

Red Knt. Call me Sir Nicholas.

1st Knt. Of what country ?

Red Knt. Of the *low* countries. You shall know more hereafter. Follow me on the morrow and I will lead you where wealth and beauty are to be found.

1st Knt. Lead where you list, noble knight.

1st and 2nd Knt. We'll follow.

[*They draw their swords ; the Red Knight vanishes.*]

1st Knt. He went this way.

2nd Knt. Nay, 'twas this.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IX.—Queen PHILIPPA, with BERTHA and other
Attendants.

Q. Ph. Oh, Bertha, I am weary of this life!

Ber. Madam, I would I could devise some means
 To cheer your Highness that you weep no more.

Q. Ph. Good Bertha, tears soon cease; but who can stay
 The silent weeping of the heart? I'm weary.

[*She reclines on a couch.*]

Ber. Madam, there is a minstrel in the camp
 Whom I have bidden to approach the casement
 About this hour. She hears me not,—she slumbers.

[*Music is heard without.*]

Fair one that sleep'st within thy bower above,
 Let music, mingling with thy visions, weave
 A spell that may not break thy calm repose,
 But softly as the breath of summer eve
 Bears honey dew-drops to the folded rose,
 Whisper of love. [*She wakes.*]

Q. Ph. What music do I hear?

Ber. It is a minstrel wandering through the camp.

Q. Ph. Truly, a sweet voice and a cunning hand.

Ber. Will't please you, Madam, that I bid him enter?

Q. Ph. Well, let him come, perchance 'twill solace me.

[*At a sign from BERTHA exit one of the Attendants.*]

Ah, could but Time reverse the stern decree
 That bids him haste with joy and halt with sorrow,
 This world would prove less dreary than it is.

[*Attendant re-enters with IDA.*]

Q. Ph. Minstrel, what song was that you sang?

Ida. Your Highness,

'Twas a poor tribute of a bard of Wales
 To his fair mistress.

Q. Ph. Sing it o'er again. [She bows and sings.]

Q. Ph. Thanks, minstrel, thanks. So young and yet so skilful.

Come hither. Take this jewel for thy pains.
Beautiful youth, I would I were as thou art;
For surely such an art must make thee happy.
What! wepest thou?

Ida. Madam, I am most wretched.

Q. Ph. And wherefore?

Ida. Oh, forgive an English maiden!—
[Throws herself on her knees.]

Q. Ph. Maiden! and why this boldness of attire?

Ida. Oh, hear me, gentle Queen. I came from Calais
To plead for those who are my second parents.
St. Pierre and his good wife, though I am English,
Took me, an orphan, and have bred me since
As their own child. I come to plead for them,
And crave a little sustenance.
The garb I wear was donn'd for my protection
From ribald soldiers at a time like this;
So pardon gracious Queen.

Q. Ph. My noble girl,
This garb of thine need bring no blush of shame
To virtue's cheek, since for her sake 'tis worn.
Good Bertha, see she be refresh'd; she's pale
And faint. Meanwhile we'll ponder and decide
What may be done. She must remain.

Ida. O Madam,
Grant me safe conduct to return to Calais.
All I hold dear are there, and I will die
With them if such be heaven's will.

Q. Ph. Well, go, refresh thee, and repose awhile.

[*Exeunt BERTHA and IDA.*]

Enter the BLACK PRINCE.

Queen. My Edward ! my sweet prince ! Let me enfold thee
Once more in these fond arms.

Black Pr. My gentle mother !

Queen. And tell thee how it hath rejoic'd my heart
To hear how thou didst win thy knightly spurs
On Cressy's field.

Black Pr. I wore this armour, mother,
Which I have donned to shew thee. These white plumes
I took from the slain monarch of Bohemia,
The noblest of our foes.

Queen. My little hero !
Stand there and let me see thee fairly in them ;
Why in a year thou'st slipped up to a man !
I must not call thee *little* Edward now.

Black Prince. Good mother, am I not seventeen ?

Queen. True, true,
And, in thy sable armour, *quite* a man.
And oh, how like to what the king was once !

Black Pr. Is that so strange ? who should I then be like ?

Queen. Thou little rogue ! well, bless thee, thou hast
cheer'd me.

I was not much in spirits ; for I have griefs
That tend to shorten life.

Black Pr. Not yours, I hope ?

Queen. That rests with Providence. But hear me, Edward !

When thou art king,—if Heaven should so ordain,—
Let the few precepts of thy mother's love
Be in the casket of thy memory stored,
Like jewels, for her sake ; and these among them.
First, then, beware of over-praise ; for this

All princes are condemn'd to listen to,
Even from those who love them.

Black Pr. Ay, dear mother
Their praise shall ever teach me what I should be,
Rather than what I am ; and I shall deem
Their friendship rather than their judgment speaks.

Queen. Well said, my child ; this shows thee humble-minded.
So, then, be humble still : to thy superiors,—
For kings have greater than themselves around them,—
'Tis but thy duty ; to thy equals, courtesy ;
To thy inferiors, generosity.
Thus thou shalt stand confess'd, in all men's eyes,
The archetype of true nobility,
Of princely comity and gentleness.
In fine, my son, let thy own ripen'd virtues
Be thy chief bodyguard. With such an army
Thou needst not fear a rebel through the realm,
For every English breast will be thy shield.

Black Pr. Most true ; and there's another army, too,
Shall claim my utmost care. I will not see
The brave old English lion grow so feeble
As to be kicked at with impunity
By every ass who thinks his teeth are gone.

Queen. Well, well, I will not weary thee with precepts.
Now tell me, dear, what tidings hast thou brought ?

Black Pr. Among the rest,
I've heard to-day the women from the East,
Who went to aid our sick and wounded soldiers,
Are on their way to Calais ; and, in sooth,
Their service is much needed. Long inaction,
After the furor of successful battles,
Has thinn'd our army more than did our foes.

Queen. Oh, the good sisters ! bless them, French and
English ;

They shall have queenly welcome. Come, sweet Edward,
We'll walk together through these wooden chambers;
To hear thee talk will chase all sombre thoughts.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE X.—*The Battlements. A storm gathering.*

Eust. Alas! my poor Justine, 'tis useless now
To hasten home to thee. Better awhile
Let thee indulge some hope, while I despair.

[*Eustace hears the sound of merriment in the English camp.*]

Oh, how repulsive rings the voice of joy
In misery's ear! 'Tis like some mocking fiend
Exulting in the misery he creates.
Hunger and pestilence and maddening grief
Rage like three furies through the desolate city,
And yet, within a mile of all this woe,
Doth nimble-footed mirth and festive glee
Chase slumber from the drooping lids of night:
Such is the tragi-comedy of life!

[*The groans of the people are heard.*]

How awful is the groan of a whole city!
The wind wails, too, as 'twere a human soul
In woe! Thou unseen ranger of the sky,
Sole sympathizer with our deep despair,
Bear to the conqueror the piercing cry
Of thousands here in worse than dungeon plight—
Moan in his ear, and touch his heart with ruth.

Symbol of glorious liberty and life,*
No despot's iron hand may grapple thee,
Thou mock'st the gleaming falchion's puny might,

* “Yr wybr wynt helyaw,” etc.—*Vide D. ap Gwilym.*

And laugh'st, amid thy cloudy citadels,
 War's fiery brand, and tyrant's chain, to scorn.
 While man, though bound to man by mutual wants,
 Abuseth his weak might to crush his fellow,
 Stupendous agent ! thou, like Him who made thee,
 Usest *thy* power for beneficence,
 Changing the noxious vapours of the earth
 To wholesome sustenance for all that breathe,
 And wafting kindly seeds to hungry soils.
 Whether in balmy gales thou fill the sail,
 Whisp'ring sweet music in the mariner's ear,
 Or loud-careering through the icy depths
 Of dim unsunn'd ravines—o'er ghastly steeps,
 Drear sojourns of snow-throned solitude ;
 Or hush'd in awed repose, as when thou hear'st
 The earthquake's voice—sublime as is thy own—
 Beneath the rocking temples—cities—tombs
 Of gods and kings and caliphs—in all climes
 Circling the north, or in Zahara's plains
 With burning blast, still bounteous as a God.

Oh, wond'rous creature of th' Omnipotent will !
 Thy world-pervading breath now sweeps along,
 Exulting 'mid a thousand forests' roar,
 Now like a spirit moving on the deep,
 Can lift a myriad crystal mountains up,
 And rend their hoary crests—the watery vales
 Are but thy footprints ; thy invisible wings,
 Chariots of Deity : Yet, mighty wind,
 When this poor mortal chrysalis shall break,

[*Strikes his breast.*]

And leave th' ethereal prisoner unenthralled,
 I shall rejoice with thee, and shall ascend
 On wings as fleet, to freedom great as thine. [*Lies down.*]

SCENE XI.—*The storm and darkness increase. The Chief Demon, in the form of the Red Knight, appears standing on the battlements amid a blood-red glare.*

Chief D. Here famine is my deed, but I would learn
 How speed my comrades through the ravag'd world.
 Demons, executors of my behests,
 Who range the shoreless ocean of the air,
 Plague-pouring, or with wings elate ride forth
 Like dragons on the purple helm of war;
 Ye who, in earthquake-stricken solitudes,
 Gloat o'er men's homes now turn'd to sepulchres,
 Buried at hopeless depths, or sateless still,
 Revel with gory-handed massacre;
 Ye, too, whose element is for a time
 The desert whirlwind or the fierce typhoon,
 The whelming iceberg or volcano's flame,—
 Hear, from where'er on land or sea ye roam
 This earth-encrusted ball of living fire,
 Hear! and attend my call!

[*A number of Demons appear, in the forms of the human characters they had assumed, some wearing kingly crowns.*]

Chief D. What have ye done?

2nd D. Nothing! yet all is done!

Chief D. How sayest thou?

2nd D. We, who chose human forms, found our vocations
 Forestall'd by men so like to fiends that we
 Had nought to do but look on and rejoice.
 Man is his own tormentor, as of old.

Chief D. Where are the rest?

2nd D. See yonder, where they come
 Shrieking with joy, like vultures to the slain.

Chief D. (turning towards them as they approach.)

Powers of the air, condense your mighty forms
Into a human compass, here to hold
High converse with your chief.

[*Some Fiends pass across the sky. They return and alight.*]

Chief D. Say whence ye come?

3rd D. From India's charnel-house.

4th D. From Persia's ashes.

5th D. From Libya's blast-empoison'd mounds of dead.

6th D. From Syria's flaming towns and wasted plains,
Where childless matrons make their frenzied moan,
And outrag'd daughters wander with despair.

7th D. From rayless dungeons of Neapolis.

8th D. From Rome's ensanguin'd streets, where liberty
Gasps in the clutch of mitred despotism.

9th D. From secret conclaves held in gilded halls
By many a royal deputy of hell.

10th D. From scenes of deeds till now unknown to men.

Chief D. And thou, dispenser of the pestilence,
What on thy mission hast thou late achiev'd?

5th D. On the cloud-crownèd ramparts of the Ind,
Where Himalaya spurns all things that breathe,
I stood and view'd the corse-encumber'd plains
Of eastern Asia. Downward swooping thence
I steep'd my pinions in the mortal taint,
From silent cities, of the graveless dead,
And swift as night enshrouds the torrid clime,
I chang'd each boasted Persian Paradise
From Samarcand to fair Damascus' plain*
Into a gloomy lazarus-house: I swept
O'er Araby and Ethiopia's wilds,
To where the land of the lone river parts
The Libyan from the Syrian wilderness.

* The dominions of Persia in those days extended to Damascus.

Like a miasm, I brooded on the face
Of the palm-fringed flood, and speedily
Turned Egypt's horn of plenty to a curse;
For few that drink the noisome waters live.
Then on the burning breath of the Siroc
I cross'd the sea, that seem'd a nether sky.
The fugitive fleets, like white birds migrating,
These ere I reach'd the stormy Cyclades
I left with livid carcasses for crews.
I heard their last faint cry of agony,—
“Where shall we fly, for the Destroying Power,
Like the dread angel in the Apocalypse,
Plants one foot on the sea and one on land,
Poisoning the monsters of the deep with dead.”
In many an isle I smote all living things,
And o'er the coasts of Greece and Italy,
Gaul and Hispania to the Lusian shore,
I pour'd the ulcerous horror. Then awhile
Bating my course; where Gibilterra's rock *
Looks like a crouching lion o'er the wave,
I paus'd to hear the wind bear after me.
The wail of millions.

Ch. D. 'Twas a flight in sooth
Worthy the boast of an infernal power.
But where wert thou? [turning to another.]

A Demon. I saw him in his course,
Like a dark star,† obscuring those that shone

* No doubt many have observed the lion-like form of the rock of Gibraltar, which is very remarkable when viewed from a certain point on the bay, with the town of Algesiras on the left.

† Bessel, the astronomer, says, in a letter to Humboldt, "The belief in the existence of non-luminous stars was already prevalent in Grecian antiquity, and especially in the early times of Christianity." (*Vide Cosmos.*) St. Jude seems to allude to this theory, where he compares certain evil persons to "wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever."

With gloomy wings like rays, but not of light :
 I follow'd in his wake, and where the plague
 Relaxed its rigour, there with murderous wile,
 I whisper'd in some saintly bigot's ear,
 "The Jews have done it all ; that race accurs'd,
 By subtle poisons cunningly dispensed,
 Now glut their hatred of all Christian souls ;
 And when the cry arose, 'Death to the Jews,'
 I saw twelve thousand in one city slain
 With horrible tortures."*

Chief D. Thus far heaven is baffled ;
 If slaughter were the end and not the means,
 Fiends might be now content. But hear me all.
 Slaughter avails not if we fail to check
 Man's moral growth. Here must we smite the head
 Of our grand enemy, Intelligence ;
 Crush the world's mind. From these two nations most
 Arise the Anakim of intellect ;
 The moulders of mankind, the earth's true lords,
 Who conquer Nature's powers and make them prove
 Subservient to man's use. Of these are they
 Who break into the cloisters of the heavens,†
 Measure yon suns, and cast a sounding-line
 Into eternal space. Of these are they
 The lofty, the large-hearted ones, who join
 Science and power to boundless charity ;
 "Give wings to Truth"‡ 'gainst whom the strength of hosts
 Is weak as withs that bound the Danite's limbs.
 Lovers of freedom they, their only slaves
 Are the chained lightnings and the elements,
 That toil for them like demigods, or speed

* This number was actually destroyed in the city of Mentz.

† "Cælorum perrupit claustra." *Vide* epitaph on Herschel's monument.

‡ "I will give wings to Truth," said the inventor of printing.

Through soundless deeps on errands of good will,
 And link the hemispheres in bonds of love.
 These are the men—these are the deeds—of Peace ;
 Be ours the task to mar them still by war.
 War 'twixt these foremost nations—war through them,
 With all humanity. Leave then henceforth
 All quarters of the ravag'd world beside ;
 'Twixt France and Albion sow a hell of hate,
 Blind these two eyes of Europe, lest they see
 To what a height of glory both might reach
 Beyond what either nation could attain
 By conquest of the other. Let each seek
 To build its greatness on its neighbour's ruin,
 That so, in place of Love and Truth and Right,
 Force, Fear, and Pain may rule man's destinies.
 This is our sphere, the world—our world—is *here*.

[*They vanish.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Sunrise at sea, near Calais. A ship seen in the offing. A boat passes, containing a number of Sisters of some religious order. Above is faintly seen a group of Guardian Spirits following the same course, bearing palm-branches and wreaths of flowers.*

Chorus of Sisters.

Pale stars and purple dews,
 And skies serene the sapphire ocean greet,
 And morn in many a wavelet views
 Her golden-sandall'd feet.
 The silver-fretted robe of night
 Is fring'd with loveliest hues of light,
 Like those that dwell

Within the opal's breast,
 Or dance with sweet unrest
 Around a dove's neck, in the sunny ray,
 Or in some smooth forsaken shell,
 In pearly hollows play.
 All nature lies at peace,
 And war is known
 To human breasts alone;
 There, will it never cease?
 Oh! that thirst of sway should be
 Quenchless as the penal flame;
 All-devouring as that sea,
 O'er whose tideless waves we came,
 Which, where day o'er Lusia sinks,
 From the drear Atlantic flows,
 And the Euxine ever drinks—
 Drinks, but yet no fulness knows.

Guardian Spirits.

Sisters, whose deeds have shewn
 How high above the sphere
 Of earthly hope and fear
 Virtue may soar and bring the reflex down
 Of heaven in her face,
 For you we left our starry biding-place,
 Well pleas'd the blissful mansions to forego,
 And find again with you our paradise below.

We are those who once among you,
 Linked in sweet sororal love,
 Shar'd each mortal grief that wrung you,
 While with noble zeal you strove,
 Wasting like your midnight taper,
 Fragile, faint, yet loth to yield,

Braving still the poisoned vapour
 Of the pest-house or the field.
 Still endear'd we hover o'er you,
 Bending, oft with homage meet,
 Unseen flowers we strew before you,
 Perfum'd at your hallow'd feet.
 Though no mortal ear may hear us,
 Though no waking eye behold,
 Yet we speak to you when near us,
 And our arms your forms enfold.
 On the helm or in the sail,
 Oft we watch the rising gale.
 When the blast too rudely blows,
 With our wings we interpose.
 When the breeze in silence fails,
 With our wings we fan the sails
 From the sun and from the dew,
 From all ills we shelter you,
 Guard you in the moonless dark
 From the headland and the shoal,
 From the sea-hound pirate bark,
 Till you gain the destined goal.
 When you sink in tranquil sleep,
 Rang'd around, our ward we keep.
 To refresh your wearied view—
 Wearied with the eternal blue—
 Visions of green lands we bring,
 Prank'd with all the blooms of spring.
 Kisses such as angels know
 On your eyelids we bestow,
 On your cheeks and foreheads fair,
 On your chastely braided hair,
 And your slender hands that rest
 Meekly crossed upon your breast:

Round your brows our garlands twine,—
 Garlands weaved of flowers divine—
 Whispering heavenly dreams the while,
 Till your lips with rapture smile.
 Then at dawn we fade away,
 Fade like stars into the day.

The Sisters.

O saintly Winifred ! sweet sister Rose !
 Whose relics, mourn'd by many a hero's tear,
 By the dark rolling Euxine wave repose,
 If still your gentle spirits linger near
 To those who shar'd on earth your joys and woes,
 Deign to bend o'er us as we glide along,
 And with your seraph voices aid our song.

All.

Chief of the Heaven-born sisterhood,
 Immortal Charity,
 With whose mild chastening spirit unimbued
 Hope would presumption be,
 And Faith an image of the dead,
 Walking the earth in ghostly guise,
 To mark for future doom her every foe,
 Where is thy tabernacle here below ?
 O ! art thou fled
 For ever to the skies,
 Tired with the vain appeal to human hearts
 Or in some lone pacific isle,
 Some Eden of the main,
 Far from the haunts of Christian men,
 And civilizing arts,
 Seek'st thou some gentle breasts that know no guile ?
 That, led alone by nature's law,
 Yet love their kind,
 And the Great Spirit adore with humble awe,

But never heard thy hallow'd sisters' names,
To wrap for them the beauteous isle in flames ?

Soul of the sacred twain,

O come again.

Come with thy meek o'erflowing eyes

And balm-bestowing hand.

O come again,

Sweet Queen of humanizing sympathies.

SCENE II.—*The Tilting-ground between the hostile armies.*

Knights, armed cap-à-pie, on their war horses, are seen entering the lists at different sides. A crowd of spectators in the foreground, among whom are Father JOHN, the Cook, the Purveyor, the Fool, the Surgeon, a Soldier with a wooden leg, Captain M'FERGUS, a Saracen Slave, a Minstrel with his harp, Soldiers, and Women.

Cook. What a plaguy while we wait for this tournament !

Friar. Why, what a pagan thou art to be in haste to see so many worthy knights engaged in mortal combat !

Cook. I knew not they were going to fight at outrance.

Friar. No, because gorging thyself for three days and nights hath made thee oblivious of everything else. A man who eats as thou dost lives only half his life.

Cook. True, Father Confessor. If he would live the other half, by the Lord ! he must also drink as I do. But methinks, from my experience of thy visits to the royal kitchen and other particulars, thou hast not utterly despised the good things of this life.

Friar. My son, spiritual nourishment is what I most affect.

Cook. Then piety must be wondrous fattening.

Friar. Appearances beguile thee. Thou knowest not how that fasting and mortification and self-flagellation have nearly driven me into a dropsy.

Cook. Come, then, take a little wine for thy stomach's

sake; (*hands him a can, and the Friar drinks*) and tell us what news has been stirring since I last filled thy wallet.

Friar. Hast thou heard (*drinks*) of the spirits (*drinks*) that have late been seen (*drinks*) all wrapped in flames (*drinks*) on the battlements (*drinks*) of Calais? (*returns the can completely drained*).

Cook. No; but if they be *ardent* spirits, I wish thou wouldst exorcise them into my empty can.

Friar. My son, I emptied it for thy benefit, though to my own discomfort, seeing thou hadst taken more than was good for thee.

Cook. Gramercy for thy pious consideration. If thou treat all thy penitents thus, it accounts for thy self-sacrificing puffiness. But see what a goodly array of knights! Who are they who have just entered the lists?

Friar. They are two of the Red Cross, who have challenged two others to mortal combat because they said St. Louis was a wrong-headed bigot, and that such weak saints were the devil's sprats to catch shoals of herring mortals. Oh, they are most religious knights, and would die for the faith.

Cook. Ah, there's nothing like true religion to make one fight. It fills us with so much sound conscientious animosity and revenge that nobly scorns all peace and forgiveness of those who differ with us.

Fool. (sings) Oh, the good St. Louis was valiant and wise,
The type of a true crusader;
With a dog of a Jew,
Or the infidel crew,
His sword was his chief persuader.

Cook. Thou'rt right, Fool; St. Louis never stood prating and arguing and shilly-shallying with infidels, but put them to death.*

* St. Louis maintained this was the duty of every Christian knight.
—See *Joinville*.

Fool. (*sings*) Ten thousand Turks in his great emprise
 He slew without mercy or dole,
 And it grieved him sore
 That he couldn't kill more,
 But his good intentions sav'd his soul.

Ah, he *was* a saint, was he not, Brother John?

Cook. More reverence, Fool. He is *Father* John.

Fool. Oh, I crave pardon. I forgot that most of his holy order are *fathers*.

Cook. Beware, Fool, or thou'l be whipped.

Fool. (*to the Saracen slave*) Ah, Suliman, my little convert, thou hast no duels in thy country.

Sul. No; we deem this Frank custom homicide.

Fool. But wouldest thou not endeavour to put to death the man who should heap insult on thee or thy faith?

Sul. No, not in cold blood.

Fool. Then thou'rt no Christian.

Sul. No, not in that.

Fool. To call it manly to avenge an insult,
 To deem acknowledgment of error baseness,
 Forgiveness but a childishness of heart.
 To kill in cold blood, yet escape the law,
 Is the proud privilege of Christendom.

Sul. Ah, Christians understand all the trade of killing far better than do our Mohammedans.

Fool. Your infidel savages are competent blood-spillers too, and your Damascus blades are sharp practitioners in war; but for widow-and-orphan-makers of the finest quality, who shew the greatest skill and dispatch in the noble art of slaughter and extermination, commend me to some of the armies of civilized Europe.

Soldier with the wooden leg (*advancing*). What meanest thou, Fool? Wouldest thou have no wars? What should we be without military glory? What should we be without national dignity and—

Fool. And what should we be without national wooden legs? (*strikes that honourable appendage of the soldier with his bauble*) We should be reduced to have real legs and real glory.

Sold. Away, Fool! What is the cause of our superiority to all the rest of the world in everything?

Cook. (*stepping in between them*) Beef—beef is the great conqueror and civilizer of the world, and the origin of all our moral, physical, and intellectual superiority.

Capt. M'F. Ha, ha, ha! A truce to thy raillery, and, Master Cook, trou us the song of General Beef, which I have heard thee sing.

Cook. Well, let me moisten my mouthpiece, or I shall sing as hoarse as a midsummer cuckoo. (*drinks*)

Song.

1.

When the heroes of Cressy and Calais lie cold,
And the annals of England our deeds shall unfold,
If the homage they render us merit belief,
'Twill be said there were none like old General Beef.
Then all hail to the virtues of General Beef,
The strength of old England, of heroes the chief!

2.

Baron Manny and hardy Sir John de Vienne
Are doubtless the proudest and noblest of men.
But what are the barons or knights of Burgoin
To a Baron of Beef or a brave Sir Loin?
Oh, the staff of the army is General Beef,
The strength of Old England, of heroes the chief!

3.

If a murrain should seize the old General Beef,
 Oh, the camp and the country would all come to grief;
 For his sinews are sinews of war, and, in brief,
 All the weal of the people depends upon Beef.
 Then may health fill the quarters of General Beef.
 The strength of old England, of heroes the chief!

4.

If in Calais they're ready to eat up their chief,
 'Tis because they have nothing like General Beef.
 So, Commanders-in-Chief, from my book take a leaf,
 You may lead where you will with good General Beef.
 O, a jolly old warrior is General Beef,
 The strength of Old England, of heroes the chief!

[*They cheer him.*]

A Marshal. Stand back! stand back, I say! The King approaches.

Enter King EDWARD, Barons, Knights, etc. Lord IVAN standing apart.

King. Call hither young Lord Ivan. (*he approaches*) We would know

What cause, Lord Ivan, led you to defy
 To mortal combat our good Lord De Morley,
 Advanced by us for his good services.

Lord I. My liege, he did appropriate my arms,
 That may be traced from my great ancestor,
 Ivan ap Meredith, a prince of Wales;
 And when I recognized my own insignia,
 Emblazoned on his surcoat and his banner,
 I challenged them as mine, and bade him change them.
 But, with a proud contempt, this parvenu lord,
 (Who was but an esquire of my good brother),

Whose pedigree is but of yesterday,
Whose crest should be a mushroom—

King.

Hold, Lord Ivan.

In this you do forget your courtesy.
You wrong the honoured root from which you sprang,
And cast a slur on our prerogative.

What! is the *founder* of a lordly house,
Whose valour, worth, or genius, for him won
A nation's gratitude, a monarch's love,
Less noble than the proud descendant peer,
Whose borrowed merit lives but on the dead,
Whose arrogance, like a bloated worm
Bred from the mould'ring relics of a lion,
Deforms where most it feeds, and, lacking deeds
To emulate his sire's, falls back upon
A pedigree patched up with musty relics,
And perks it in the face of native worth ?
Was not your great progenitor, whom all
Must deem the greatest that has borne his name,
A parvenu? Sir Knight, that word may mean
One of great nature's true nobility,
Whom no prerogative of kingly power
Could more ennoble.

Lord Ivan, we well know your jealousy
Of his promotion and superior fitness
For high employments. We forbid the combat,
On pain of banishment, and grant Lord Morley
To bear what arms he list.

Lord I.
There is no precedent.

My liege, for this

King. Nay, tell me not
Of precedent, the god of moral cowards,
Who fear to think but as their grandsires did.
Merit with us shall be the gauge of honour;

Nor shall pretentious privilege of birth
 Swagger itself into undue command,
 While humble aptitude is set aside,
 Or made the drudge of high incompetence.
 Lord Ivan, now you know our will in this.
 Lead on unto our seats beside the lists.

[*Exeunt KING EDWARD and Attendants.*]

Capt. (to the Surgeon) Let us follow the Cook through the camp to-day. I have a device that may yield us some sport: we'll ply him with more liquor, take him at night to the tent of the King's Chamberlain, and leave him there. The Chamberlain will be at the King's banquet, and his varlets at the revels. Come, I will tell thee more as we go along.

Surg. Ha, ha! a good device.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*The battlements of Calais.* JOHN DE VIENNE, wounded. Knights, Squires, Soldiers, and Citizens.

J. de V. Lower the standard of the King of France
 And raise the English; so he may divine
 To what extremities we are reduced.

[*The Soldiers lower the standard.*]

1st Cit. The French camp seems all movement and alarm.
 What means that vivid flash, as if an *Etna*
 Had burst the earth and cast into the sky
 A fountain of white fire? Hark! how it roars!

2nd Cit. 'Tis the Greek fire. They burn their ammunition
 See, see! the flames, fann'd by the gathering storm,
 Leap on from tent to tent, and hither send
 The burning flakes that fill the atmosphere.

3rd Cit. The whole camp is ablaze. Look, by its light
 The ranks of men-at-arms wind up the hills,
 Like to huge serpents, all with blood-red scales.

2nd Cit. And further still I see their gilded pennons
 And glinting armour lighted by the moon ;
 I hear the tramp of their retiring horse,—
 Our army is in full retreat.

1st. Cit. Oh, God !
 Then all is lost,—hope of relief hath vanished.

2nd Cit. Shout, groan again ! Let them not thus depart
 Until they hear the voice of our despair. [*They all shout.*]

J. de V. 'Tis all in vain ; the distance is too great ;
 Let us retire to the City Hall,
 And there consult what best may vantage us.

All. Ay, to the Hall. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.—*The Tent or Hut of the King's Chamberlain.*
In one corner a table spread with viands and wine, in another a bed. Enter the Cook, the Surgeon, and Captain M'FEEUS, the two latter singing,

Oh, the staff of the army is General Beef,
 The strength of old England, of heroes the chief.

Cook. Ha ! ha ! ha !

Capt. M'F. [*to the Surgeon, aside.*] These are the quarters of the King's chamberlain. We'll persuade Roger they are his own, he is too drunk to know the difference. The chamberlain's lady is come over with the Queen's retinue, and they say he is as jealous of her as Herod, so a good joke may arise out of it.

Surg. Ha ! ha ! ha ! A rare joke.

Capt. M'F. Now, Roger, get thee speedily to bed.

Cook. What ! without a sip of wine ?

Capt. M'F. Oh, here's a flagon for thee, if thou lik'st, and a pasty and other viands to boot.

[*Pours out the wine, and hands it to him.*]

Cook drinks and sings,

Pope Clement, at draining a cup of sack,
Would bang us all to a pulp;
A quart at a draught he sucks it down.
Ye Gods, what a glorious gulp!

Capt. M'F. So now to bed; here's a new nightcap for thee. [Puts the Chamberlain's nightcap on his head.]

Cook. Ha! ha! my old crocodile of a wife is become thoughtful for me. [They assist him to get into bed.]

Capt. M'F. There: we'll put the table near thee, with the wine and viands, to refresh thee in the night; and don't be frightened if thou see a ghost or a nightmare in the shape of the King's chamberlain.

Cook. A fig for ghosts and nightmares! Put my sword near me.

Capt. M'F. Here it is (puts the Chamberlain's sword near his pillow); not a useless bedfellow in these times. Good night.

Cook. Good night, my trumpet of war.

Surg. Good night.

[*Exeunt Captain and Surgeon.*]

[*Enter the Wife of the Chamberlain.*]

Wife. Oh, these revels! would they were over! they will be death to my husband and myself. He had hoped to leave the royal presence long ere this. [She hears a loud snore from the bed.] Good Heavens! he has returned and retired to bed during my absence; he had promised to sup with me. [Looks at the table.] What—what means all this? Well, I have no heart to sit down alone, so I may even arrange myself for the night. [Begins to remove her outer garment, when a knocking is heard.]

Wife. Who's there?

Chamb. 'Tis I. Open, open.

Wife. Ha! who are you?

Chamb. What! know you not the voice of your husband?

Wife. My husband! Oh, misery, 'tis he! Then who can this be in the bed? Wretched woman that I am! What shall I do?

Chamb. Open, I say.

[*She opens the door.*]

[*Enter Chamberlain, who takes her by the hand.*]

Chamb. My love. The glory of the British monarchy is departed.

Wife. What's the matter?

Chamb. The throne is tottering—

Wife. What on earth has happened?

Chamb. The dignity and decorum of majesty are gone. I may as well throw up my wand of office.

Wife. But, in Heaven's name, what is it?

Chamb. The King went to the banquet to-day without requiring me to walk backward before him, and has dispensed with that noble ceremony.

Wife. Oh, is that all?

Chamb. Is that all! Wouldst thou have a rebellion or an earthquake or the end of all things? But what ails *thee*? Why dost thou look so apprehensively toward the bed?

Wife. There's—there's—

Chamb. What's there?

Wife. A man or a beast—I know not.

Chamb. In my bed? The devil! (*Removes the covering. The Cook sits up, and looks stolidly at him.*) Villain, who art thou?

Cook (hiccupping). By my troth, 'tis the nightmare. This comes of gorging and guzzling indigestible conglomerations for three days and nights.

Chamb. Ruffian! how hast thou dared to enter my quarters?

Cook. 'Tis thou hast entered mine, old goblin.

Chamb. [to his Wife, sternly]. Madam, what means this?

Wife. Believe me, I know not. Possibly he is some tipsy varlet who, in our absence, mistook our habitation for his own. The servants are all at the revels. But pray watch him while I seek assistance to expel him.

Chamb. 'Twere best, and speedily. [Exit Wife.]

Chamb. Who art thou, miscreant?

Cook. I am the king's minister of internal affairs.

Chamb. The king's minister! (Looks at him.) More like a drunken soldier.

Cook. Soldier! Ah, truly I brandish my steel and brave the fiercest fire in the service of my sovereign day by day.

Chamb. Speak truly who thou art, or die.

Cook. Ha! ha! Dost thou not know the king's cook, who was the making of thee?

Chamb. The king's cook the making of me—of me! Dost thou know who I am, sirrah? [Draws himself up, with an air of offended importance.]

Cook (laughing). To be sure I do, thou cursed incubus, that hast disturbed my peaceful slumbers. Thou wast born in a stew—thou hast arisen like a phoenix out of some of my hashes.

Chamb. Know, sirrah, I am the king's chamberlain.

Cook. Hoity toity! In sooth, if I did not see thee with two heads I might believe thee, for thou art not unlike the tawdry old jackanapes.

Chamb. Crests of my noble ancestors! where are my varlets?

Cook. Ha! ha! Crests?—ay, those peppery cocks' combs. Ancestors that were lately crowing like thyself, ancestors of yesterday.

Chamb. Soul of the mother that bore me!

Cook. That's the soul of the goose, perchance, that disagreed with me—that helped to bring thee into existence, thou abominable monstrosity!

Chamb. I'll have thee put in the stocks.

Cook. Who thy father was, the devil knows ; but most likely some cursed mushroom—ha ! ha ! Thy grandmother a crab ; thy uncles and aunts hard livers, soaked in villainous liquors.

Chamb. Would that this wand were a sword ! My ancestors called coxcombs ! my father a mushroom ! my tenderest of mothers a goose !

Cook. Tenderest ! she was the toughest old bird I ever met with.

Chamb. I can no longer— Out, out, insolent slave ! scum of the kitchen, begone, I say ! [Beats him with the wand.]

Cook. Stand clear, with that skewer of thine, thou jabbering spectre (*shows his fists*) ; thou will-o'-the-wisp from a muddy pool. I'll disperse thee as a shot does a waterspout (*flings a pastry and other viands at him*). Or, if thou be flesh and blood, I'll carve thee into giblets, thou double-headed gander ! (*Draws the sword, and rushes out of bed at him.* At this moment the Chamberlain's lady returns with the Cook's wife, Capt. M'FERGUS, the Surgeon, and some of her domestics. The Cook slashes at them, making them dance and caper over his sword in all directions. At length the Cook's wife jerks a besom into his face ; he falls, and is secured.)

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The City Hall.* JOHN DE VIENNE and the people.

J. de V. Knights, squires, and citizens ; my faithful comrades.

Who, in your persons, have experienced
What fearful things the human spirit will bear
Ere it succumb to famine—you have heard

The ultimate conditions of King Edward ;
 That six of our chief citizens bare-headed,
 Bare-footed and with ropes about their necks,
 Present themselves before him to consign
 The keys of Calais and the fortresses,
 And then be put to death (*the people groan*).

Hear then, my answer ;
 That not the poorest lad that lives in Calais
 Should fare worse than the highest citizen.

A Citizen. Right nobly said.

Another. Spoke like a valiant knight.

J. de V. Friends, we must perish ; now no choice remains
 But of the mode : say then, shall we endure
 Still greater misery and indignity—
 Await till famine sap our waning vigour,
 Snatch from each wither'd arm the idle steel
 And lay us all ignobly in the dust ;
 Or once more sally forth with sword in hand
 And die like men destroying many a foe ?
 For me, I choose this last alternative.
 Join with me then, and let us forth at once.

Justine de St. Pierre. He is no father who could thus
 advise,

Nor hath he sister, wife, or aught endear'd,
 But isolated from all human ties
 Regards his own vain-glorious self alone.
 O soldier citizens, whose wives or daughters
 Have bathed your wounds with tenderest care, and watched
 you

With the untir'd sedulity of love
 Through days and nights of pain ; speak you for us,
 Or if you can resolve to leave us here
 First plunge your weapons in our faithful breasts
 And then go forth. We know, alas, too well

What sieges are—what demons men become,
 When once demoraliz'd by lasting war.
 And will you leave us to such nameless horrors,
 To your eternal shame as to our own ?

John de V. Lady, what can we do ?

Justine de St. Pierre. Die with us here !

For even despair may teach you how to die
 Without dishonour.

A Woman. Ay, far better this
 Than things more hideous still.

A Citizen. We'll fire all Calais.
 And leave no living soul to be dishonour'd,
 But let our foes insult our ashes only.

A Citizen. Ay, make the city one vast funeral pile ;
 'Twill balk the conqueror of half his triumph
 And all his hop'd-for plunder. [*Eustace enters.*]

Another Citizen. Come away.

Another. We'll perish all united.

Another. Stay, oh ! stay.
 Let us not thus consign all we hold dearest
 To death that may be lingering. Oh—since fate
 So wills it—let our swords in mercy slay them.
 'Twill be but one short pang, and all is over.

[*Most of them draw their swords, and in a frenzied manner
 seize the Women, some of whom faint in their arms.*]

[*Justine rushes toward Eustace.*]

A Citizen. Then let us strike together. *John de Vienne,*
 Give us the word, and Heaven look down with pity.

Eustace de St. Pierre. Hold, I implore you, ere you
 perpetrate

A deed so ghastly. Hear me, high and low.
 'Twere pity that so many Christian souls
 Should die by sword or famine, while the means

Exist to save them. He or they among us
 Who should avert such dire calamity,
 Would render not unacceptable service
 To God and man, and I repose that faith
 In finding grace in our dear Saviour's sight,
 That I will be the first to yield myself
 A sacrifice, to save the blood of those
 Whose lives are far more precious than my own.

Citizens. Oh noble Eustace!

Others. Glorious man! true hero!

[*Some bow before him and embrace his knees, some kiss his hands, and otherwise exhibit their enthusiastic admiration.*]

John Daire. I will be second to my cousin Eustace.

J. Wissant. And I the third.

P. Wissant. You go not without me

Gaspard. *Gustave.* A fifth is ready.

Ida. (aside) Oh! my *Gustave!* now

This "marble breast" shall prove what love it bore him;
 To die with him were sweeter far than life
 Bereft of him. One more is ready here.

[*Others exclaim,*] We too!

John de V. Enough!—the number is complete.

Just. de St. P. (To Eustace). Oh, let me go with thee; the
 tyrant king

Will not refuse one victim more.

John de V. Dear lady,

It may not be.

Just. de St. P. O most beloved Eustace,
 Let me not part from thee; let our two souls
 Whom sorrow more than joy, alas! hath link'd,
 Be yielded up together; let me share
 The glory of thy death.

Eust. [Aside.] I must be brief;
 She will unman me else. Think, dearest, think
 Of that sweet son whom thou wouldest thus abandon.
 Oh, live to teach him all his mother's virtues,
 And sometimes tell him of his father's fate,—
 How love for thee, for him, and for our country,
 Was stronger than the love of life: and may
 The years I lose be added to thy life!

Just. de St. P. One moment yet, one kiss more for his
 sake,
 For whom alone I can consent to live;
 One more—one more—

John de V. Madam, the time is pressing.
 They must depart at once, for while we dally
 Do hundreds perish in the streets.

Just. de St. P. Farewell! [*She faints.*]
 [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*A chamber adjoining the Royal Kitchen, which is partly seen through an open doorway. The Cook and his Wife; the former engaged in some culinary operation.*

Cook. I tell thee it's all thy doing, thou pestiferous termagant, thou perpetual blister.

Wife. My doing!!

Cook. I say it is thy doing. Thou *wouldst* wrangle and naggle with me while I was cooking the king's favourite dish, whereby I spoilt it and gave his highness an indigestion, whereby he got into a royal ill-humour, and wouldn't grant the Ambassadors anything they wanted in behalf of the starving Calesians, so now the city will be sacked, and plundere~~a~~, and fired, and half the inhabitants put to death, all owing to that everlasting mill-clapper of a tongue of

thine. Oh! he'd have thy head off if he knew it; think of that, thou traitress, and tremble.

Wife. Why, thou muddle-headed wassail-swilling sot that married me only to be thy scapegoat, wouldest thou heap on me the blame of thy own drunken revellings for three days and nights? But it is ever so on the day after these bouts—thou abominable guzzler—thou never ending tosspot!

Cook. Out, old porcupine. Away, I say! the fate of nations depends on my culinary operations.

Wife. The fate of fiddlesticks!

Cook. Wilt thou begone? If ever I cook the King's dish again while thou art within a mile of me, may I be grilled on one of the D—l's gridirons!

Wife. And he'd enjoy thee as a sweet morsel, for they say the blacker the sinner the more toothsome to his palate.

Cook. I wish Beelzebub would take thy lungs for a pair of bellows; he'd find them everlasting serviceable.

Wife. Then wouldn't I blow the fire to a white heat under thee, thou tyrant? I'd make thee fizz, fizz, fizz (*puts her face close to his*). Thou hast not deserved such a wife as I have been to thee.

Cook. No, truly, unless for some deadly unrepented sin, thou dozen devils all rolled into one. But hold thy peace and begone, or by the holy tongs of St. Dunstan that seized Satan by the nose, I'll chop thee into mincemeat. I am not to be trifled with again to day (*goes up to her in a menacing attitude with a cleaver*).

Wife. Wilt thou? (*puts her arms akimbo and follows him up while he retreats, then takes the cleaver from his hand.*) Oh, thou lion o' gingerbread, that look'st so fierce and art so easily crunched up into a sop, ha! ha!

[Enter a Servant.]

Cook. What dost thou want, sirrah, while we are interchanging sweet connubial endearments?

Servant. Oh, Master Cook, the Calesians have found six burgesses who have given themselves up to be put to death to save the city, and they are on their way hither. The Black Prince and the Bishops, and Barons, and Knights are all going to plead for them with the King; but the Prince desires all the household, even to the lowest scullion, to come and cry mercy with them for those brave men.

Wife. That we will, with one voice.

Cook. Truly with *one* voice, for *one* only can be heard where thou art. Heaven grant that the King may not see them until he has eaten his dinner !

Wife. What difference can that make, old dotard ?

Cook. The difference of their heads, sweet baby. I know the lion that's in the King ; but I'll move his what-d'-you-call-'ems of compassion, for I'll put an extra cup of malvoisie in his favourite dish. *This* will make him cover his claws with a velvety fur in a twinkle—especially if the Queen be there—*she* never squabbles with her lord and master (*looks at his Wife*).

Wife. That's more than thou canst answer for, go to.

Cook. Well, go thou and prepare to throw thyself at the royal feet with the rest ; and may those sweet trebles of thine help to mollify the King,—at all events, they're sure to be heard. I'll to my labours, there lacks but an hour of noon. Oh ! if he will but dine ere he see them, then perchance there will be pardon for the poor burgesses and peace for France. Away ! the destinies of France, England, and all Europe lie at this moment in—my saucepan.

[*Exit the Cook, through the middle doorway, with an air of importance, a saucepan in his hand ; his Wife, looking after him, holds her sides with laughter as she retires at the side door.*]

SCENE III.—*The battlements of Calais.*—JUSTINE DE ST. PIERRE, MARTHE (with the child of JUSTINE in her arms), and other women.—*An organ is heard in the Town of Wood intoning the Te Deum.*

Justine de St. Pierre. See you no one returning yet?

Look, Marthe;

My eyes are dim with weeping.

Marthe. Dearest Madam,

The time has scarce sufficed for them to reach
The nearest outpost of the English camp.

Just. de St. P. Terrible moment! Oh, suspense as
torturing

As what I dread to hear!

Marthe. Comfort you, Madam,

The knightliest soldier of the English host,
Sir Walter Manny, pledged his word to plead
In their behalf. Moreover, it is said
The King himself is prone to mercy.

Just. de St. P. Yes;

The towns and villages of Brittany
That lie in ashes, the black wasted plains
Of Normandy, and this poor famished city,
Tell of his tender mercies.

Marthe. Yet I've heard

Durham fared worse than any of our towns,
For there the French and Scots put all to death,
And razed the very churches to the ground.
Philip is less remorseful than King Edward.

Just. de St. P. Both, both alike. O tiger-hearted kings
Ye crownèd curses, who have made your thrones
The concentration of all human crime!
Whose sport is war, whose quarry is mankind;
Let courtier-loyalty or feigned faith

Baptize your hideous passions with new names,
 And laud the deeds of envy and revenge,
 Lust of dominion and tyrannic pride,
 As high exploits of patriot chivalry,
 Glorious exemplars for succeeding times ;
 And let the hireling priests that haunt your trains
 In sacrilegious hymns and impious praise
 Give thanks for your successful butcheries :
 Ay, let the organ's solemn euphony,
 Joined to the clamour of triumphant hosts,
 Drown the faint cry of frenzied wretchedness,—
 In vain,—your clamour cannot dull Heaven's ears,
 Or dust of triumph blind Omniscient eyes.
 To *them* your thrones are built of human bones,
 The purple of your robes is dye of blood,
 Your crowns are gemmed with tears that were congealed
 In eyes that stony grief forbade to weep :
 And in Heaven's ears, weak-wailing misery,
 Hoarse with complaint to man, shall so prevail,
 That Mercy shall be mute in your behalf,
 And fold her all-embracing arms. Whilst thou,
 O Angel of Almighty Retribution !
 Dipping thy finger in the blood they've shed,
 Shall write their doom on their accursed fronts,
 And hurl them to the Hell of Homicides.

Marthe. Have patience yet. The hand of Providence
 Oft seems prepared to strike when raised to bless.

(*JUSTINE is led away.*)

SCENE IV.—*A chamber in the King's habitation in the Town of Wood. King EDWARD seated on a throne, attended by the BLACK PRINCE, Bishops, Barons, Knights, and the Women from the East. The six Burgesses are seen*

kneeling before him. The keys of the town, together with a sword, are presented by EUSTACE DE ST. PIERRE.

Eustace. Most gallant King,—here, prostrate at your feet,

Behold six burgesses of Calais, once
Substantial merchants; who present to you
The keys of town and castle. We yield up
Our bodies to your absolute will and pleasure,
To save our fellow-townsmen, who have borne
Unmeasur'd miseries. Vouchsafe, great prince,
Out of your royal magnanimity,
To have compassion on us.

King E. Heaven forbid
That we should so forget the claims of justice:
Forget the English blood that has been spilt
By the Calesian pirates round our coasts,
In our good merchant ships and maritime towns,
Not to say aught of all our losses here.
No; let the headsman execute our will,
And speedily.

[*The principal dignitaries, including the BLACK PRINCE here cast themselves on their knees.*]

Black Prince. Beseech you, Sir, have pity.

All. Mercy, most gracious Sir.

King E. It cannot be.

Sir Walter. Oh, generous king, in Heaven's name forbear
Soil not your fame for nobleness of soul
By such an act as this, nor give your foes
Just cause to speak of you reproachfully:
For all the world will deem it cruelty
Of heinous kind to put these men to death
Who of their free will offer you their lives
To save their fellow-citizens.

King E.

Sir Walter,

The men of Calais by their piracies,
 Not less than by their obstinate defence,
 Have caus'd the death of thousands of our subjects ;
 Wherefore these fellows too shall die, albeit
 Too poor an offering to appease the ghosts
 Of such a number.

Sir W. My liege, if for the love I bear your person,
 My lengthen'd service, and for that I hold
 Your reputation dearer than my life,
 I might in plainer speech unfold my heart,
 I would adventure to remind your grace
 Heroic princes war not for revenge,
 But to achieve imperishable fame,
 Not only by their deeds of martial prowess,
 But clemency and generosity.

King E. Was Philip generous when you were his
 prisoner ?

Did he not seek your life though he was bound
 By his son's plighted word, the brave young Duke
 Of Normandy, to whom you had surrendered ?

[Sir WALTER *attempts to speak again.*]

Enough ; we hear no more.

Black P. O Sir, have patience.
 I am too young and have no wealth of words
 To move your clemency, but I remember
 How that same Duke of Normandy, whose deeds
 You oft have bid me note for my ensample,
 Answered his sire :—If, said the noble Duke,
 Honour and faith and magnanimity
 Were banished from all human kind beside,
 They should find refuge in the breasts of kings.

King E. (rising) Silence, boy ! By St. Edward ! bring
the headsman

And march them to the place of execution !

Black P. I will go seek the Queen to aid our suit.

Sir W. See where she comes.

(Enter Queen PHILIPPA. Sir WALTER rises and goes
towards the QUEEN.)

Sir W. Madam, our hopes all cling to you.

Queen Ph. Alas !

I fear the King is grown inexorable.

Sir W. The delicate plant 'tis said will turn aside
Th' incumbent stone an athlete could not move.

Queen Ph. (The QUEEN throws herself on her knees.)

Ah, gentle Sir, since I have passed the sea,
With peril of my life, to see your face,
I have not craved one favour at your hands,
But now, upon my knees, I humbly sue
For these poor citizens. Oh ! for my love—
If still you prize it—and the hope of that
Which is unborn,—nay, for the Virgin's love,
Who never bore but one immaculate Son,
And for His sake, who was all charity,
Be merciful. The meanest of mankind
Have power to take away life ; to bestow it
Is the prerogative of God alone
And Kings, his deputies.

K. E. Rise, Madam, rise.

Queen Ph. Oh, first speak that which will afford me
strength,

Speak life to the most generous of their race,
Whom you have doom'd to ignominious death :
Men who are nobler than the noblest captains

Their country e'er produced ;—for, pardon me,
 If I rate theirs above all deeds of arms—
 Glory of France and honour of mankind,
 Their names shall be recorded not alone
 In earthly annals, but the “Book of Life.”
 They date their title to eternal fame
 From no cold hearths or devastated fields,
 No cities wrapp'd in flames and stain'd with blood ;
 But from a city saved—saved by their death,
 Unless you spare them. Oh, what sacrifice
 More pure, more grand, more humble, more divine,
 Save His I name not, that redeem'd a world ?

K. E. Ha ! Dame, I would you had been otherwhere ;
 You have entreated so in their behalf,
 I can refuse you nothing. Do with them
 Even as you list. Thou'rt worthy to be Queen
 Of a great people, and be loved by all. [He kisses her.]

[*Here JUSTINE enters and throws herself into the arms of EUSTACE.*]

Queen. (to her attendants.)

Conduct them speedily into my tent,
 Feed them, and let their feet no more be bare ;
 Some run into the city with supplies,
 Else hundreds there must die the worst of deaths.
 Haste, haste ; O Edward, this is joy indeed !

[*At this moment IDA discovers herself to her lover, and sinks into his arms.*]

Queen. But what means this ? Methinks we know that face.

Ida. O pardon, gracious Queen, an English girl
 Whom love had led to follow her betroth'd
 To die with him if death had been his lot.
 Whatever seems disloyalty in this

Was known to me alone, and on my head
Rests all delinquency.

Queen. Sweet maid, not only do we pardon thee,
But with our own hands we unite you both.
Henceforth let rosy Hymen, not red Mars,
Mingle the blood of French and Englishmen,
Our youths become the willing prisoners
Of fair French maidens, while French gallants, too,
Lay siege to many a gentle English heart,
And love's soft triumphs be their only boast.

King. To this we cry Amen ; and let it ring
From heart to heart on either shore, Amen,
Till mutual scourges turn to mutual aids.
Then France and England, like a mighty arch
Whose sides of equal strength lean toward each other,
Bridgeing the envious current that divides them,
Shall grow the stronger by whatever weight
May seek to crush them, since betwixt them lies
The keystone Peace : that safeguard once removed,
Then all is ruin.

A Bishop [advancing with his crosier]. Let the Holy Word
Be echoed from all hearts. Amen !

All. Amen !

SCENE V.—*A Volcano, as in the first Scene of the first Act, but the sky changed to a serene daybreak. The Demons are seen reluctantly descending into the crater at the command of the Spirit.*

Spirit. Down, down to your red gulfs, ye loathēd crew,
The foulest brood of monster-teeming crime ;
Though some that wear a loftier image now,
Do deeds as foul as yours, man shall progress,
Albeit through centuries of blood and tears.

Through the dark curtain of futurity
 I see imperial France now hand and heart
 With England and her mighty scions leagued ;
 I hear their voices to the nations cry :—
 “Giant ambition shall no more o'erstep
 “Great nature's rightful landmarks of dominion,
 “Plant his red footsteps on the piléd Alp,
 “To stamp the virgin snows with stains of gore,
 “Or from the ridgy height of Caucasus,
 “With glance of eagle-eyed cupidity,
 “Gloat o'er the vision of a hundred realms,
 “To cry, ‘They shall be mine !’ The soldier now,
 “Spurning his idle sword, shall ply the loom,
 “Or help to fill bright Ceres' golden horn.
 “Those armaments redoubtable, that once
 “Frighted old Neptune with their iron roar,
 “Shall bear our bounty to less favour'd lands,
 “And love of country merge in love of man.
 “Each warlike engine shall innocuous lie,
 “As is the fulmen in the marble hand
 “Of some colossal Jove, and ours shall prove
 “The might of Science and Humanity.”

THE END.



